

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS

JUNE 21, 2011

**Proclaim National HIV Testing Day on June 27, 2011**

Since the AIDS epidemic began in 1981, 1.7 million Americans have been infected with HIV. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) estimates that more than 1.3 million people are living with HIV in the United States. However approximately 21 percent of those 1.3 million Americans living with HIV are unaware of their positive HIV status.

Nearly 200,000 Californians have reportedly contracted HIV AIDS and nearly 90,000 have died since the epidemic began in the early 1980s with 31,076 of those deaths in Los Angeles County alone. California ranks second in the nation to cumulative AIDS cases and there are up to 7,000 new HIV infections in the state every year.

The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health reported that by the end of December 2010, there were approximately 42,364 people living with HIV AIDS in the County of Los Angeles. Of the reported number, approximately 37,000 are male, 5,000 are female and 400 are transgender.

HIV AIDS has had a devastating impact on minorities, women and young people in the United States. Racial and ethnic minorities accounted for almost 71 percent of the newly diagnosed cases of HIV and AIDS and 73 percent of babies born with HIV AIDS belong to minority groups.

In the African American community HIV AIDS has become an epidemic and nearly 200,000 African-Americans have died from AIDS in the United States. African-Americans

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MOTION

MOLINA \_\_\_\_\_

RIDLEY-THOMAS \_\_\_\_\_

YAROSLAVSKY \_\_\_\_\_

KNABE \_\_\_\_\_

ANTONOVICH \_\_\_\_\_

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represent 10% of the population in Los Angeles County, but comprise an estimated 24% of all confirmed HIV AIDS cases, and 25% of recent AIDS cases. African American women are particularly struck by this disease, and are almost 23 times more likely to die from AIDS.

HIV AIDS is spreading at a rapid rate in the Hispanic community. Hispanics accounted for 22.8 percent of HIV infections in 2009, despite making up only 15 percent of the U.S. population and Hispanic women were 3.6 times more likely to die from AIDS.

Each year on June 27, the National Association of People with AIDS organizes National HIV Testing Day. This unique initiative sends the message to those at risk from already living with HIV that there are powerful reasons for learning one's HIV status and encourages individuals to seek out voluntary HIV testing and counseling as a critical first step so that the knowledge of HIV status can be essential in making informed decisions about their lives.

This is especially true given two major advances in the treatment of HIV AIDS which have occurred over the last 20 years. One is the development of drugs that inhibit the virus's growth, preventing or delaying the onset of AIDS and allowing people living with HIV to remain free of symptoms longer. The other is the development of medications that has shown promising results in reducing the transmission of the virus from an HIV-infected mother to her child. Due to these advances, there is every reason to stay educated, engaged and empowered.

The Empowerment Congress of the Second District is engaging community leaders, community stakeholders, faith-based groups and elected officials to stop the spread of sexually transmitted diseases and HIV AIDS. Further, on National HIV Testing Day, the Second District will be mobilizing the "The Health Spot" – a mobile testing van newly dedicated to providing screenings, education information and distribution of condoms in high-risk minority areas.

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The County of Los Angeles should join with the efforts of National HIV Testing Day and continue to work towards preventing the spread of HIV AIDS and provide greater access to prevention, care, treatment and support services to those impacted by this disease.

**I THEREFORE MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:**

Proclaim Monday, June 27, 2011 as National HIV Testing Day throughout Los Angeles County and urge local residents, community stakeholders and County employees to support and participate in events planned on this day.

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